

1. When will this installation take place?

The two orthovoltage machines were installed and commissioned at the end of October when we received approval from the Department of Health. Prior to the commissioning of the technology we ensured that all the practitioners at the unit received the necessary training to operate the machine.

2. How much does this treatment cost and how much was it before compared to recent costs?

In cancer treatment there is no one-size-fits-all. Each diagnosis needs to be evaluated by the patient's care team, which can include your GP, dermatologist and oncologist. Once diagnosed, an individual treatment plan which can include radiation therapy (if appropriate) is designed for the patient. The oncologist will then discuss the plan including the cost of treatment with the patient.

Orthovoltage treatment is **approximately two to three times more affordable** than conventional treatment on a linear accelerator (linac) for skin related conditions. A linac is a large scale piece of equipment used in external beam radiation treatment and can treat a variety of cancers.

Radiation treatment doses are usually divided into a number of smaller doses called fractions. You will have the fractions as a series of treatment sessions that will make up your radiation therapy course. So, if you can deliver treatment utilising a more cost effective piece of equipment, you can reduce the cost per fraction which means more patients can afford the treatment.

Studies estimate that the annual cost of treating skin cancer in South Africa could be as high as ZAR 92.4 million per year. If you consider that most skin cancers are preventable, these funds could be better utilised for the treatment of other diseases.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4818961/>

3. Why has orthovoltage and superficial treatment machines become less common in recent years?

In recent years, orthovoltage and superficial treatment machines have become less common, because oncology treatment units upgrade to linear accelerators which are much larger, sophisticated and expensive equipment.

4. What kind of alternative treatments are there?

Depending on your diagnosis and type of cancer each treatment will vary. Radiation therapy, electro surgery, excisional surgery, photodynamic therapy, cryosurgery and laser surgery are all used to remove or kill cancer cells. One of the advantages of orthovoltage therapy is that it is non-invasive and tissue-sparing.

5. How many people in South Africa are struggling with this type of cancer when looking at the statistics.

South Africa has the second highest incidence of skin cancer in the world after Australia. The latest figures reported by the National Cancer Registry of South Africa shows that skin

cancer is one of the most common cancer diagnosed in South Africa with more than 20 000 reported cases and 700 deaths every year.

6. What is the future of technology in medical care? Are there other technologies out there that South Africa is yet to reach?